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ABSTRACT

This curriculum for training geriatric service workers is designed to incorporate additional communication and group skills along with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to work with older adults. The curriculum is organized in four modules. Each module is assigned a time frame and a credit unit base. The modules are divided into four major areas: knowledge, practical skills, professionalism/self-awareness, and integration. The knowledge module contains four units that cover the life process, needs of older adults, nutrition, physical and mental illness, fire and other safety factors, abuse, and communication. The practical skills module contains four units that cover personal care, medications and dressings, health assessments, ambulation, home management, and communication skills. The three units of the self-awareness and professionalism module cover these competencies: the health care team, understanding feelings, attitudes and needs, death and dying, recognizing one's own values and fears, stress and burnout, and employment opportunities. The final module contains four units on integration of skills (field experience). Each of the units includes a goal, objectives, learning activities, and competencies. A bibliography of selected materials completes the curriculum guide. (KC)

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GERONTOLOGY GRANT #93-7007
BUREAU OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CURRICULUM FOR THE GERIATRIC SERVICE WORKER

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum for training the Geriatric Service Worker is designed to incorporate additional communication and group skills along with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to work with older adults.

Prerequisites for admission into the program are a high school diploma or a GED. Prior to participating in field experience, the student must learn CPR and First Aid and present certifications in each.

The curriculum for the Geriatric Service Worker is set up to be in module form. Each module is assigned a time frame and a credit unit base. In order to provide the maximum amount of participation within the student group, enrollment should be limited to 15-20 students. This enables both interaction in classroom participation and instructor attention to practical skill applications. Successful completion of the entire program of 15 credit units will earn the student a certificate of completion. The program is set up to enable each student to work effectively with older adults. The skills and the knowledge acquired by the students are interdisciplinary and competency based.

The modules are divided into four major areas: Knowledge, Practical Skills, Professionalism/Self Awareness, and Integration.

The Knowledge area consists of the basic theories on the life process and aging. It presents information to clarify needs and desires of the older adult as well as to help dispel stereotypes.

The Practical Skills area concentrates on the basic skills necessary to work as a nurses aide or a home health aide. It encompasses personal care, medications, dressings, ambulation, health assessments, home management and basic communications. Attention is given to the area of communication and group dynamics.

The Professionalism and Self-awareness area enables the student to be aware of his/her personal biases and to learn to work as a part of the health care team.

The Integration section is the coordination of knowledge, practical skills, professionalism and self awareness through placements in various settings of service for the older adult.

The goals of each area are as follows:

Knowledge - to increase knowledge of physical, psychological, social, cultural, and economic aspects of the aging process.

- to increase knowledge of physical, psychological, social, cultural, and economic aspects of chronic illness

- to learn about community resources available to meet the needs of the older adult.

- to understand communication problems facing the older adult.

Practical Skills - to increase skills in responding to the complex set of physical, psychological, social, cultural, and economic needs of older adults and their families

- to increase skills in the provision of direct health and social services to older adults and their families

- to increase ability of working with older adults in groups and individually

Professionalism/ Self-Awareness - to increase knowledge of self in relationship to older persons

- to increase awareness of the antithetical nature of working with older adults

- to increase disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary collaboration in meeting the total needs of older adults and their families

Integration - to increase ability to work with older adults on health promotion, illness prevention, and treatment strategies and interventions

- to increase skills in working with the older adult on an individual basis, a group basis and community level

Competencies will be determined by testing in areas of knowledge and by evaluation of skills demonstrated at the end of each module. The student must score a minimum of 75% on each unit in areas of knowledge and professionalism/ self-awareness. In the practical skills and integration areas, the student must score acceptable on a minimum of 80% of the demonstrated skills.

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PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION - 2 hours

GOAL - to understand coursework and objectives of each module

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing biases toward older adults

OBJECTIVE # 2 - understanding requirements of each module

Learning activities:

Administer pre-test
Discussion of stereotypes
Discuss syllabus
Provide assignments and dates due

COMPETENCY: student understands what is required of each module and when work is required to be submitted

PREREQUISITES

First Aid as per American Red Cross Certification

1. Accident prevention and safety
2. Emergency action principles
3. First aid for wounds
4. First aid for burns
5. First aid for sudden illness
6. Respiratory emergencies

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation of adults as per American Heart Association or American Red Cross Certification

1. One rescuer
2. Two rescuers
3. Obstructed airway

These two certifications must be received prior to field experience integration.

K N O W L E D G E

4 units - 40 hours

THE LIFE PROCESS - 8 hours

GOAL - to increase knowledge of the physical, psychological, cultural, and economic aspects of the aging process

OBJECTIVE # 1 - defining old age

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning social theories of aging

OBJECTIVE # 3 - understanding the process of socialization

OBJECTIVE # 4 - understanding developmental changes experienced as one ages

Learning activities:

Lecture on demographic, cultural, economic, psychological, and political aspects of growing older
Discussion of disengagement theory - Cumming and Howard
Discussion of activity theory - Havighurst and Albrecht
Discussion of independent vs. dependent status, unhealthy vs. healthy dependency, and interdependent relationships

COMPETENCIES: identity characteristics of aging population
Recognize the impact of cultural, economic, demographic, psychological, and political factors of aging
Describe the disengagement and activity theories
Determine the ways in which values, beliefs, norms, and actions are transferred from one generation to the next

NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS - 6 hours

GOAL - to understand the primary and secondary needs of older adults and the provisions available to meet those needs

OBJECTIVE # 1 - identifying basic needs of older adults

OBJECTIVE # 2 - identifying secondary needs

OBJECTIVE # 3 - recognizing the differences in adjusting to aging by individuals

OBJECTIVE # 4 - recognizing the availability of resources to meet the needs of older adults

Learning activities:

Lecture on primary and secondary needs of older adults
Discussion on adjustments made by older adults
Independent research and discussion of resources

COMPETENCIES: ability to evaluate and discuss the primary needs - biologic/physiologic, economic, health, psychological and social of older adults
Ability to understand and discuss the secondary needs - activity, leisure, cultural, political, and spiritual
Ability to assist in programs to meet the basic and secondary needs of older adults
Knowledge of state, federal, and local programs available to meet the needs of the older adults within the community

NUTRITION - 4 hours

GOAL - to understand the practical problems of meeting the nutritional needs of older adults considering economic, physical, and psychological changes that occur with age

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding basic nutrition and good health

OBJECTIVE # 2 - preparing food budgets

OBJECTIVE # 3 - learning the essentials of special diets

Learning activities:

Chart the four basic food groups
Discussion on factors that affect food habits of older adults
Prepare sample menus
Discussion on safe food handling and storage
Divide into groups and compare prices and ingredients of various items in relationship to planned menus and within a limited budget
Divide into groups and each group presents a specific diet with nutritional reasoning, suggested menus, and shopping suggestions

COMPETENCIES: ability to recognize nutritional needs of older adults
Ability to guide older adult in improving nutrition and food purchases
Ability to plan menus for special diets - diabetic, salt-free or restricted, low cholestrol, high protein, weight reduction or gain, soft, and constipation

PHYSICAL ILLNESS - 4 hours

GOAL - to understand the process of illness as it impacts older adults and their families

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing basic acute illnesses

OBJECTIVE # 2 - recognizing chronic illnesses

OBJECTIVE # 3 - through knowledge of disease be able to build skills necessary to work effectively with persons with acute or chronic illnesses

Learning activities:

Reading and discussion on acute and chronic illnesses
Discussion on the relationships of aging and illnesses

COMPETENCIES: Compare the nature of acute and chronic illnesses and the differences in the effects of each on the older adult
Ability to work effectively with persons with various illnesses

MENTAL HEALTH - 6 hours

GOAL - to understand good mental health and illness and conditions that may occur with growing older

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding what constitutes good mental health

OBJECTIVE # 2 - recognizing the effect that aging has on mental health

OBJECTIVE # 3 - recognizing treatable organic conditions

OBJECTIVE # 4 - understanding basics of Alzheimer's disease

OBJECTIVE # 5 - understanding family situations where the mental capabilities may be limited

Learning activities:

Lecture on good mental health
Discussion of effects of aging on mental health
Discussion on organic conditions affecting mental health
Discussion on Alzheimer's disease
Role playing with difficult family situations
Visit to a mental health program or institution

COMPETENCIES: ability to relate the mental health problems that may occur with age
Ability to accept and work with persons who may have mental problems whether organic or nonorganic
Ability to network the family and patient into various mental health programs or services
Ability to assist with support groups for Alzheimer's patients' families

FIRE AND OTHER SAFETY FACTORS - 2 hours

GOAL - to recognize the importance of safety

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding fire hazards

OBJECTIVE # 2 - understanding good safety features

OBJECTIVE # 3 - recognizing safety problems and how to prevent potential problems

Learning activities:

Lecture and film by fire department
Discussion on safety at home and in institutions
Posters made on prevention

COMPETENCY: ability to recognize potential fire and safety hazards and to deal with them appropriately

ABUSE OF THE OLDER ADULT - 4 hours

GOAL - to be aware of the physical, psychological, medical and material forms of abuse of the older adult

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding the potential for abuse

OBJECTIVE # 2 - understanding the things to look for in establishing if abuse is present

OBJECTIVE # 3 - understanding the legal issues of abuse

OBJECTIVE # 4 - differentiating the human and legal rights and responsibilities of older adults and their families

OBJECTIVE # 5 - identifying resources available to help prevent and to assist with problems of abuse of older adults

Learning activities:

Discussion on the forms of abuse
Discussion on various things of which to be aware in conversations and on visual observation
Lecture by an attorney or protective service coordinator on the legal issues of guardianship, safety, and abuse

COMPETENCIES: ability to recognize possible abuse
Ability to assist older adult with problems of abuse
Identify resources to assist with problems of abuse

COMMUNICATION - 6 hours

GOAL - to develop an effective means of communication with older adults and their families

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing the importance of effective communication with older adults

OBJECTIVE # 2 - recognizing the role that communication plays in helping us to age successfully

OBJECTIVE # 3 - recognizing the whole sphere of human communication, especially the skills of interpersonal communication

OBJECTIVE # 4 - understanding how the biological and socio-psychological aspects of aging affect human communication

Learning activities:

- Discussion on the impact of aging on intrapersonal and interpersonal communication
- Preparing a list of questions that could be used in interviewing an older adult
- Discussion for one to two hours with an older adult on a selected topic and recording the experience for a report
- Discussion of age-related changes and barriers to communicate

COMPETENCY - ability to identify the problems and to develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively with older adults

P R A C T I C A L S K I L L S

4 units - 40 hours

PERSONAL CARE - 16 hours
includes demonstrations by students for evaluation

GOAL - to understand the basic personal care skills involved in working with older adults

OBJECTIVE # 1 - learning the proper methods of providing good hygiene care

OBJECTIVE # 2 - recognizing skin care problems and the methods of care

OBJECTIVE # 3 - learning to assist patient with eating

OBJECTIVE # 4 - understandind process of elimination and developing the skills necessary to assist the patient

OBJECTIVE # 5 - learning to properly make a bed

Learning activities:

Demonstration and guided practice in techniques of bathing - tub, shower, and bed
Discussion and practice of back rub
Reading and discussion of hair care
Demonstration and guided practice of proper oral hygiene - brushing, flossing, and denture care
Demonstration of assistance with dressing
Discussion of general skin care
Discussion on causes, prevention and treatment of decubitus ulcers.
Discussion on catheter and colostomy care
Discussion and demonstration of feeding the patient at bedside and at table
Demonstration of proper bedmaking - occupied and vacant

COMPETENCY - ability to assist the older adult with all aspects of personal care: including bathing, skin care, oral hygiene, elimination and eating

MEDICATIONS AND DRESSINGS - 4 hours

GOAL - to assist the patient with medications

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding proper storage and disposal of medications and dressings

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning to properly read labels and understand directions

OBJECTIVE # 3 - recognizing side effects of certain medications

OBJECTIVE # 4 - learning proper techniques of applying dressings

OBJECTIVE # 5 - learning proper application of hot and cold compresses

OBJECTIVE # 6 - learning the proper usage of oxygen

Learning activities:

Reading labels of various medications
Discussion of proper storage and disposal of medications
Each person chooses one medication and reports on possible side effects
Demonstration of application of dressings
Demonstration of application of hot and cold compresses
Demonstration by respiratory therapist on oxygen equipment and discussion of oxygen therapy

COMPETENCIES: ability to assist patient in taking medication
Ability to apply hot and/or cold compresses
Ability to change simple dressings
Ability to assist with oxygen therapy

HEALTH ASSESSMENTS - 4 hours

GOAL - to observe, report, and record patient condition

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding health and wellness

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning to determine and record vital signs

OBJECTIVE # 3 - learning to recognize signs and symptoms of illness

OBJECTIVE # 4 - learning to provide proper documentation

OBJECTIVE # 5 - learning to use care plans

Learning activities:

Discussion on health and wellness
Demonstration and practice of determining and recording vital signs - temperature, pulse, respirations, and blood pressure
Discussion on common signs and symptoms of illness
Provide sample case studies and have groups write out care plan and then follow through with observations

COMPETENCIES: ability to recognize and record signs of illness
Ability to determine and record vital signs
Ability to follow care plans

AMBULATION - 4 hours

GOAL - to assist with problems associated with limited mobility and ambulation

OBJECTIVE # 1 - promoting independent mobility

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning to assist patient with ambulation

OBJECTIVE # 3 - familiarization with equipment available to assist patient with mobility

OBJECTIVE # 4 - understanding effects of limited mobility on older adult

Learning activities:

Discussion and demonstration on transfer techniques
Visit to durable medical equipment dealer to learn about various aids available for mobility
Practice assisting each other with walking and on stairs
Discussion of importance in promoting mobility

COMPETENCIES: ability to assist patient with mobility
Ability to teach and assist with use of ambulation aids
Ability to promote older person's ability to maintain ambulation

HOME MANAGEMENT - 3 hours

GOAL - to understand principles of good home management

OBJECTIVE # 1 - understanding importance of maintaining a clean and healthy environment

OBJECTIVE # 2 - recognizing ways to assist patient with home management

OBJECTIVE # 3 - teaching home management skills to patient, family, or significant others

Learning activities:

Each student will prepare a sample work schedule based on a situation that is given to them
Discussion on cleaning, laundry, budgeting, and shopping for the older adult
Preparing materials to assist in teaching others

COMPETENCY: ability to assist the older adult in maintaining a clean and healthy environment by effective use of time, energy, money, and other resources

BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS - 4 hours

GOAL - to develop skills in communicating with older adults and other health care personnel

OBJECTIVE # 1 - learning to communicate with the older adult in a patient and non-offending manner

OBJECTIVE # 2 - developing skills to communicate effectively with other health care personnel

OBJECTIVE # 3 - recognizing the effects of non-verbal communication

Learning activities:

Role playing
Report writing

COMPETENCIES: ability to communicate effectively with and about older adults
Ability to write reports on assessment of an interview or group meeting

COMMUNICATION SKILLS - 5 hours

GOAL - to develop skills in working with a group of older adults

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing the needs fulfilled by goups

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning the stages of group development

OBJECTIVE # 3 - understanding the types of groups which benefit the older adult outside and inside institutional settings

OBJECTIVE # 4 - developing an understanding of the role of the facilitator of a group for older adults

Learning activities:

Presentation on the range of groups for the elderly in and outside of institutional settings
Lecture on the five major stages universal to all groups as they develop
Analysis by class members on their development as a group of students joined in a common endeavor
Discussion of the role of the facilitator

COMPETENCIES: ability to understand the significance of a group experience and how it complements a one-to-one relationship
Ability to appreciate the importance of process within a group, as well as content
Identification of skills required of a group facilitator

S E L F A W A R E N E S S

AND

P R O F E S S I O N A L I S M

3 units - 30 hours

THE HEALTH CARE TEAM - 3 hours

GOALS - to understand the role of the geriatric service worker in the health care team
to increase collaboration in meeting the total needs of older adults and their families

OBJECTIVE # 1 - defining the role of each member of the health care team

OBJECTIVE # 2 - determining the responsibilities and working relationships between team members

OBJECTIVE # 3 - developing a professional code of ethics in working with the older adult

Learning activities:

Summarize the roles, responsibilities and relationships of the health care team in working with older adults
Discussion on the ethical rights and responsibilities of each member of the health care team

COMPETENCIES: ability to effectively work within the health care team
Ability to understand the boundaries of one's responsibilities within the health care team

UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES - 6 hours

GOALS - to increase awareness of self in relationship to older adult population
To increase ability to separate self in assisting older adults and their families

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing stereotypes

OBJECTIVE # 2 - understanding reasons for choosing to work with the older adult

OBJECTIVE # 3 - understanding one's personal patterns in reactions to the helping situation

Learning activities:

Testing on stereotypes
Discussion of identifying with client
Discussion on positive and negative aspects of service to older adults
Discussion on one's personal views on life and the helping situation
Keep a log of television or magazine commercials and how they portray the older adult

COMPETENCIES: ability to recognize and understand stereotypes
Ability to assess positive and negative aspects of career choice
Ability to understand one's own view of life and its impact on the helping aspect

UNDERSTANDING NEEDS - 4 hours

GOALS - to understand the needs and levels of maturity that accompany various life stages

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing the hierarchy of needs

OBJECTIVE # 2 - assessing one's own level of maturity

Learning activity:

Discussion of Maslow's hierarchy of needs
Discussion of Erikson's scheme of life tasks and development
Identification of case examples into life scheme

COMPETENCY: ability to recognize needs and stages of one's own maturity

DEATH AND DYING - 5 hours

GOAL - to understand the basic emotional stages experienced by the patient and family and how to provide care and support

OBJECTIVE # 1 - learning the phases of denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and acceptance

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning the phases of resistance, review, and transcendence

OBJECTIVE # 3 - providing emotional support to patient and family

OBJECTIVE # 4 - providing care with physical needs of patient

OBJECTIVE # 5 - understanding role of caregiver within the health care team

Learning activities:

Discussion of Kubler-Ross' On Death and Dying
Discussion of Noyes' model of resistance, review, transcendence
Discussion on involving family in treatment
Discussion on assisting patient and family in communications and expression of feelings
Discussion on living wills and euthanasia

COMPETENCIES: knowledge of stages of death and dying
Ability to assist in meeting patient's physical and emotional needs
Ability to assist family in being attuned to patient's physical and emotional needs
Ability to assist family in dealing with their own feelings about the situation

RECOGNIZING ONE'S OWN VALUES AND FEARS - 3 hours

GOAL - to recognize and understand one's own values and fears

OBJECTIVE # 1 - recognizing one's own fears about death and dying

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning to cope with loss and to assist others in doing so

OBJECTIVE # 3 - clarifying one's own value system

Learning activities:

Discussion of personal experiences of loss
Journal by student recording reactions to personal loss or a loss reported by news media
Presenting information about a terminal condition to class
Values clarification exercises

COMPETENCIES: ability to recognize one's own fears about death and dying and to not have them affect role of caregiver
Ability to understand impact of one's own values on the helping relationship

STRESS AND BURNOUT - 5 hours

GOAL - to learn to prevent stress and burnout

OBJECTIVE # 1 - knowing symptoms of stress and burnout

OBJECTIVE # 2 - learning strategies to overcome stress and burnout

Learning activities:

Discussion of stress and burnout
Discussion of three levels of prevention - primary, secondary, tertiary
Discussion on institutional stress
Discussion on understanding stress of patient through hospital stress chart

COMPETENCIES: ability to recognize stress and burnout
Knowledge of ways to help prevent stress and burnout on primary, secondary, and tertiary levels

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - 4 hours

GOAL - to prepare for job search

OBJECTIVE # 1 - developing job search skills

OBJECTIVE # 2 - identifying sources of employment opportunities

OBJECTIVE # 3 - gaining confidence at job interviews

Learning activities:

Practice writing resumes and cover letters
Practice filling out applications
Discussion on where to find employment opportunities
Mock interviews

COMPETENCY: ability to confidently proceed with search for employment

I N T E G R A T I O N

4 units - 40 hours

FIELD EXPERIENCE - 40 hours

GOAL - to incorporate all knowledge and skills obtained through modules in a field experience

OBJECTIVE # 1 - implementing knowledge gained through coursework

OBJECTIVE # 2 - implementing skills learned through coursework

Learning activities:

Professionally supervised practical experience with organizations and agencies providing services to older adults
Two days in institutional setting - 16 hours
Two days in agency setting - 16 hours
One day in home health setting - 8 hours

COMPETENCIES: ability to work effectively with older adults
Ability to empathize with older adult's lifestyle and situation
Ability to develop successful coping strategies from within older person's frame of reference

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